

ITALY

climate impacts in focus



Globally:
2023: [hottest year](#) ever recorded
2024: [predicted to be](#) even hotter

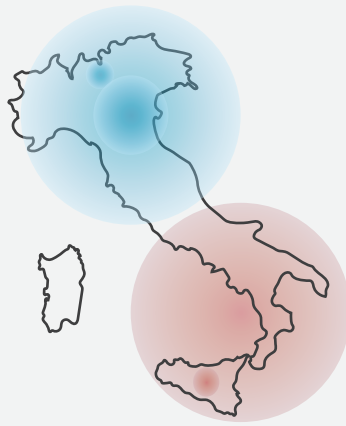


Europe is warming at [twice the global average](#) since 1991

World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and EU Copernicus Climate Change Service

Northern Italy has been experiencing storms and flash floods

Southern Italy is experiencing its third consecutive year of drought



July 2024's heatwave in Italy and five other Mediterranean countries, coming after more than a year of new record high temperatures globally in each of the 13 preceding months, would have been [virtually impossible](#) without human-driven climate change.

In May, the BBC reported that [Milan](#) received 130mm (5in) of localised rain in a single day, while a freight train was overturned by winds of up to 200kmph (120 mph) in [Borgo Mantovano, Lombardy](#).

Nowhere is this more evident than [Sicily](#). In 2021, it European heat record of 48.8°C, in 2023 [it hit 47.8°C](#). This year, conditions have become so bad that the Italian government declared an emergency in May and provided aid, though many say it is [not nearly enough](#).

[Lake Pergusa](#) – the island's only natural lake – [dried up in July](#), with huge consequences for biodiversity.

[Emilia-Romagna](#) accounts for a third of the country's total fruit harvest; it is the largest producer of pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums, and the second largest producer of cherries and kiwi. Flood waters also destroyed around 400m kilograms of wheat and killed thousands of animals, including cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. In total, around 5,000 farms were impacted by the storms.

Throughout [Sicily](#), farmers are struggling. [Fruit crops are failing](#), forcing farmers to buy water at unsustainably high prices. [Livestock is struggling](#) in the drought and may have to be slaughtered. Additionally, drought has [hit the wheat crop](#) in Sardinia, adding strain to an already tight global market as wheat is being [impacted in several countries](#) (including [the UK](#)).

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FOOD

Extreme weather means farmers cannot grow crops as normal, but fresh fruit and vegetables are essential for healthy diets. Price increases will hit the poorest families hardest, putting children at risk of malnutrition.

Non-indigenous foods from Italy in 2023

(i.e. those we cannot grow at commercial scale in the UK)

19%

of olive oil

12m kilograms worth £79m.
In June, Italy's national statistics bureau (ISTAT) announced that Italian agricultural production [shrank last year](#) due to climate change, with woody crops including olives down 11%. Olives are also affected by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*. Since it was first discovered in Puglia in 2013, it has [killed a third](#) of the region's 60 million olive trees; its spread is being worsened by climate change.

78%

of prosecco

83m kilograms worth £330m (though, as prosecco has Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), 100% of the prosecco that ends up in the UK will have originated from Italy). Droughts hit prosecco vines hard in [2022 and 2023](#) and this year they've been bombarded with [frost, storms and drought](#).

39%

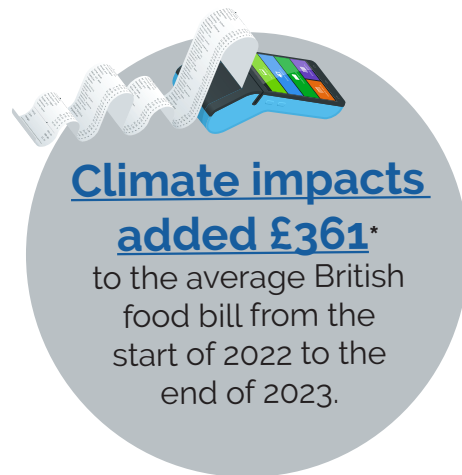
of kiwis

12m kilograms worth £19m.

7%

of table grapes

17m kilograms worth £39m



*This figure is likely to have risen given the climate impacts we have seen in the first six months of 2024 alone.

Indigenous foods from Italy in 2023

(i.e. those we import when they're out of season in the UK)

67%

of salad veg

8m kilograms worth £19m

33%

of spinach

9m kilograms worth £17m

13%

of apples

38m kilograms worth £44m

13%

of carrots

6m kilograms worth £5m

We also import animal products, like cheese and meat, from Italy. The current drought in Sicily is causing animals to suffer heat-related illnesses, has reduced hay production by 70% and reduced water availability, meaning they have little to eat and drink. Many cows are producing less milk and fewer offspring as a result.

HEALTH

There are many ways climate change harms human health:

- more intense and frequent heatwaves, storms, flooding and wildfires
- acting as a multiplier for diseases, their causes and carriers
- impacting on our mental health
- worsening air quality
- threatening food and water security.

In July 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Europe declared the climate crisis and related extreme weather events [a public health emergency](#).

[A study](#) published in July 2023 showed there were 61,672 heat-related deaths in summer of 2022 (from end May to the start of September); 11,637 of these were in one week alone (18-24th July).

Italy saw 18,010 heat-related deaths - the highest number in Europe.

It had the highest heat-related mortality rate, at 295 deaths per million.

[A new study looking at 2023](#) - the second warmest year on record in Europe, and hottest globally - calculated there were nearly 50,000 (47,690) heat-related deaths. But the study also concluded that the mortality level was 80% lower as a result of adaptation to the threat over the last twenty years, including public health measures (e.g. information about the dangers of heat), and individual measures (such as seeking shade, drinking water and checking in on vulnerable people); it recommends more adaptation strategies are needed to save more lives. Italy had the third highest rate of deaths, at 393 per million.

TOURISM

In 2023, UK residents [made more than 86m visits](#) outside the United Kingdom; Italy was the third most-visited country, accounting for 6% of (or 5m) visits.



In mid-July 2024, the Italian Health Ministry [issued alerts](#) to at least 14 Italian cities, mostly in central and southern regions, as temperatures were forecast to go above 40°C.

At the start of July, [it was reported](#) that water supplies were so stretched in Sicily – an area subject to water restrictions since February, amidst high temperatures and prolonged drought – that tourists were being turned away from some accommodation.

The European Travel Commission [recently suggested](#):

76% of tourists reported that they were adjusting their travel habits to allow for climate change

17% say they will avoid destinations with extreme temperatures.

NO VACANCY